

Review Article

## The Black Self and the White Gaze: A Fanonian Analysis of *The Hate Race*

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**Abstract:** This study reviews Maxine Beneba Clarke's *The Hate Race* (2016). Drawing from Fanon's theories from *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), the present investigation inspects how the protagonist's sense of self is designed and fractured under the encumbrance of the "white gaze." Clarke's illustration of racial microaggressions, linguistic alienation, and subjugation displays how colonial hierarchies continue in modern multiethnic people. By inspecting themes of shame, resistance, and self-awareness, the paper proves that *The Hate Race* bears a resemblance to Fanon's theory of double consciousness as the unending reconciliation between the "black self" and the "white world." This study also reveals how Clarke re-claims voice and agency through narrative performance, translating trauma into cultural confrontation. Lastly, this review contends that *The Hate Race* not only repeats Fanon's denunciation of colonial psychology but also spreads it into the sphere of modern racial experience.

**Keywords:** Black Identity, Double Consciousness, Frantz Fanon, Postcolonial Theory, *the Hate Race*, The White Gaze.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Maxine Beneba Clarke is an Australian author with Afro-Caribbean ancestry; she has written fiction, non-fiction, plays, and poetry. Clarke is actually the writer of over fifteen books for children and adults, especially a short story collection entitled *Foreign Soil* (2014), and her 2016 biography *The Hate Race*, which she modified for a stage production in 2024 (Clare 114).

*The Hate Race* (2016) revolves round Clarke's experiences growing up black in Australia for the duration of the 1980s and 1990s. This book won the 2017 Multicultural NSW Award at the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards and was nominated for the 2017 Stella Prize. In fact, Maxine Beneba Clarke's *The Hate Race* is an effective autobiographical book that rotates around the hitches of growing up as a black person in a largely white Australian society.

The story portrays the spiritual and communal scuffles of the vital character as she copes with her identity in the midst of universal racism, macroaggressions, and the unpreventable white gaze. By relating Fanon's outline to *The Hate Race*, this investigation studies how Clarke shows both the overt and discreet mechanisms of racial subjugation, from linguistic estrangement to social elimination, and how these experiences form the protagonist's sense of self. Likewise, the play stresses acts of opposition and self-affirmation, demonstrating the probability of re-claiming agency irrespective of predominant racial hierarchies.

It is argued in this examination that *The Hate Race* not only ricochets Fanon's visions of colonial and racial psychology but also links it with the modern multicultural societies, revealing the obstinate legacy of colonial ideologies in modernism. In doing so, Clarke's book offers a dynamic contribution to understanding how Black identity is performed, challenged, and recreated on both personal and communal levels.

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## 2. Statement of the Problem

In spite of the great attention to multiculturalism in contemporary societies, racial prejudice and systemic discrimination continue to affect the real experiences of black people. In *The Hate Race* (2016), Maxine Beneba Clarke portrays how the central character copes with her identity in a mostly white Australian framework, facing both explicit racism and indirect macroaggressions. These experiences bring about mental strain, estrangement, and the internalization of repressive societal standards, a happening that echoes the theories defined by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952).

The problem discussed in this article is double: first, how systemic and interactive racism disturbs the development of black identity in a modern postcolonial society; and second, how the leading role's performance, narrative voice, and confrontation policies can be understood through a Fanonian viewpoint to disclose the permanent influence of colonial ideologies on contemporary societal structures. Although preceding studies have inspected Fanon's theories in historical or literary contexts, there is a necessity to use his perceptions in analyzing modern theatrical works, chiefly those that portray lived experiences of racialized people in allegedly multicultural situations.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1. On the Theory

Frantz Fanon, a pivotal scholar in postcolonial theory, is famous for his works *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. His theories mostly focus on the psychological and cultural facets of colonialism, predominantly on the identities of colonized people. Fanon contends that colonialism produces a weighty feeling of alienation and disintegration amongst the colonized, as they struggle with their enforced identities and the dehumanization that originates from colonial domination (Bulhan 4-5).

According to Macey, Fanon accentuates the significance of retrieving agency and identity through a procedure of psychological decolonization. He suggests that the colonized people have to defy and disassemble the internalized racism and inferiority complex imparted by colonial governments. This conflict is vital for attaining factual freedom and self-definition. Furthermore, Fanon supports the inevitability of violence in the fight against colonialism, inspecting it as a purifying tool for the colonized to repossess their humanity and proclaim their individuality (31-35).

In his books and particularly *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon discusses the ways by which a black is referred to and socially identified by the white based on their race or skin color. What is remarked in *Black Skin, White Masks* depicts the challenging experiences undergone by Fanon himself as a black man living in a world controlled by white people. This issue enables the white community to enforce a racial image on black people (83). This image which is established by the white man's eyes (Fanon 84) has its origins in colonialization. In fact, and as mentioned before, this problem is not only about black people, but also includes any non-white colonized subject.

As Fanon declares in *The Wretched of the Earth*, colonized people have the right to benefit from violence in order to become self-determining and free. *The Wretched of the Earth* is another significant book by Fanon, published in 1961, which presents a powerful critique of colonialism and imperialism. The book puts emphasis on the procedure of decolonization and the fierce brawls that often go with it (36-37).

In "Pitfalls of National Consciousness," Fanon also disapproves of the idea of the "national bourgeoisie" as a collection of cultivated elites who often form the leadership of postcolonial states. He asserts that this cluster means to be more worried about power and egotism than about the requirements of the common people and that they often uphold colonial structures of subjugation even after freedom. Thus, the only way to strictly become free from colonialism is to rebel against it utterly and to create a new society that is free from the binary of colonizer/colonized (38-40).

### 3.2. On the Book

"When We Say Black Lives Matter by Maxine Beneba Clarke" by Quealy-Gainer offers a review of the historical brawls against racism and discrimination suffered by black people. This involves allusions to important occasions in civil rights history, the legacy of slavery, and the enduring influence of systemic racism. Clarke has drawn relations between past prejudices and modern problems in order to emphasize how the fight for equality is not finished yet (52).

It is also specified by Quealy-Gainer (52) that Clarke is renowned for her powerful storytelling. The article then takes account of personal stories that typify the real experiences of black people in a society described by racial burden. The phrase "Black Lives Matter" is important to the movement and the article. Clarke has inspected what this phrase implies, putting emphasis on the fact that it is not only a slogan but a call to action.

Likewise, the article alludes to the way in which racism is visible in diverse establishments, such as the law, education, and healthcare. A substantial point of the Black Lives Matter movement is the call for allyship from people of

all trainings. The article essentially inspires its readers to understand their prominence in the fight for racial justice, stressing the worth of listening, learning, and vigorously defending black voices (Quealy-Gainer 52).

"The Hate Race" by Bush is about Clarke's difficulties as a black lady in a society predominantly filled with white people. Fanon's theory generally debates the idea of the "Other," where the colonized subject is observed via the lens of the colonizer. In *The Hate Race*, Clarke has referred to her experiences of being measured as the "Other" in miscellaneous communal circumstances. Similarly, Clarke talks about the mild but inevitable nature of racism, like microaggressions that she has gone through in her usual life.

As a black woman, Clarke's experiences are under the influence of not only by her race but also by her gender. In this study, we distinguish that Clarke alludes to the moments of conflict and endorsement in the face of racism. Clarke's consideration of her cultural identity and the chase of belonging in a society that often lowers her can be examined through a Fanonian view point (Bush 232-233).

#### 4. Significance of the Study

This analysis is significant for several causes. First, it aides to appreciate how modern theatrical texts, such as Maxine Beneba Clarke's *The Hate Race* represent the emotive and common consequences of racism on black people in contemporary postcolonial societies. Second, the present paper conveys understandings of the apparatuses of racial conquest, such as the internalization of prejudgment, microaggressions, and the ever-present result of the white gaze, which form both discrete and shared experiences of lowered individuals. Third, the research adds to hypothetical discourse on postcolonial literature and theatre by demonstrating how modern performance can be a chance for reviewing systemic racism and examining strategies of confrontation, agency, and identity repossession.

#### 5. Theoretical Framework

This study benefits from Frantz Fanon's postcolonial theory, chiefly his analysis in *Black Skin, White Masks*, as the main theoretical framework. Fanon's theory emphasizes the psychological and social outcomes of colonialism and racism on black skin, underlining how systemic oppression forms identity, consciousness, and relational associations. Integral to his theory is the notion of double consciousness, the internal conflict suffered by downgraded people who cope with their own self-perception while concurrently observing themselves through the viewpoint of a prevailing white society or the so-called white gaze.

Fanon refers to the "white gaze" as a perspective through which black people are observed by white society. This standpoint diminishes black people's identity to stereotypes, and strengthens their inferiority. In other words, the white gaze establishes a dichotomy where black individuals are perceived as "the other," a problem that results in racism and a fight for identity (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 109-140).

Fanon regards racism as a universal and mental paradigm that brutalizes human beings based on their race. He maintains that racism is not just an individual preconception but a social arrangement that preserves disparity and vehemence. This systemic racism affects the consciousness of both the oppressed and the oppressor (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 17-43).

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon examines the importance of having black skin in a mainly white society. He expresses the emotional consequences of colonization and the fight for identity faced by black people. The word represents the physical and societal indicators of racial identity that are laden with disgrace and historical repression (82-104).

Regrading the term "double consciousness", Fanon says that it is about the internal clash undergone by colonized people who struggle with their identity in a world that enforces a destructive image upon them. This division generates disintegration, as they wrestle with both their own self-perception and the view enforced by the colonizer (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 1-10).

As stated by Siebert and Zahar, Fanon claims that the colonized or racially relegated subject often goes through alienation, internalized inferiority, and pressure between authentic selfhood and the socially forced identity shaped by the dictator. He also brings up the matter of the white gaze as a prevailing instrument through which joint ethics and ethnic chains of command are generated (19).

Another concept that is addressed in this study is "microaggressions." From a Fanonian viewpoint, microaggressions can be assumed as delicate, commonplace acts of racialized dehumanization that strengthen the colonial gaze, thus marking the subject as lesser, other, or unusual. These microaggressions include numerous kinds, such as dismissive comments, stereotypes, or implicit biases. Fanon highlights how these microaggressions seek to preserve alienation and subordination among those who are subjected to them (Sue *et al.*, 69-71).

In the examination of *The Hate Race*, Fanon's theory enables us to scrutinize how the principal character develops her identity in a stereotypically white Australian society, challenges both unambiguous and unplanned varieties of racism, and endeavors to recuperate agency irrespective of general limits.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### 6.1. The White Gaze and Internalized Racism

The principal character in *The Hate Race* struggles with the white gaze as a chief and cruel force that setbacks her identity and self-perception. The endless observation from a mainly white society is palpable in numerous ways, such as microaggressions, overt racism, and the pressure to obey white standards. This gaze is not only a submissive observation; it is a dynamic judgment that strengthens the power relations between diverse races.

For example, the novel opens with a scene in which Clarke is walking through suburban Melbourne with her daughter in a pushchair. Then, a young white man in a car slows down in order to shout racist abuse at her, telling her to go back to her own country, "Fuck off, your black bitch," the ute driver screams from the open window. "Go on, fuck off. You make me sick, you fucken black slut. Go drown your kid! You should go drown your fucken kid. Fuck off, will you! (vi). Clarke is worried about the inequality that her young son and daughter will bear as black people going through the Australian school system.

Fanon refers to the mental toll of being watched through a racialized viewpoint, stating, "I am overdetermined from without. I cannot think of myself without being thought of as a black man" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 109). This idea is deeply in line with the writer's experiences, as she struggles with her identity in a world where she is continuously defined by her race. The core character often finds herself handling a linguistic landscape where her speech is controlled.

For example, when she attempts to comment on her thoughts in a typically white situation, she faces suspicion and derision. A line from the book shows this experience: "When I speak, it feels like I have to translate my thoughts into a language that is not my own" (16). This sentence is a sign of the yearning to assert her identity although she is under the force of the white gaze.

In public situations, the narrator's observation of the white gaze is more. She evokes an experience at a local café: "Every time I walk in, I can feel the shift in energy. Conversations stop, and I am suddenly the subject of whispers and glances" (32). This pressure corroborates how public spaces become grounds of racial stress, where her being there is marked by her difference.

It is remarked by Fanon that the black people implement the tendencies of the overriding culture, instigating self-consciousness and a worn-out identity. The main character indicates this internalized racism, opposing against reservation. She says, "Sometimes I wonder if I am enough, or if I will always be seen as less" (33), divulging the emotive consequence of the white gaze.

### 6.2. Double Consciousness and Fragmented Identity

Double consciousness, as used by W.E.B. Du Bois for the very first time, is very well tangible in Clark's writing. W.E.B. Du Bois presents the notion of "double consciousness" in his seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. He labels it as the interior struggle undergone by African Americans who deal with their identity in a racially separated society. Du Bois refers to double consciousness as the feeling of having "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings" (Du Bois 9).

This conflict rises from the requirement to reunite one's self-perception as a black person with the way one is observed by a society that undervalues blackness. Du Bois accentuates that this opposition leads to a broken identity, where African Americans have to continuously exchange between their own self-perception and the exterior views enforced by a racist society.

Frantz Fanon expands Du Bois's idea of double consciousness in *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* by applying it to colonialism, and analyzing its mental implications, thus supporting innovatory changes as a tool for repossessing identity. The focal character endures too much pressure regarding her identity. On one hand, she has her own appreciation of herself, shaped by her cultural upbringing, personal experiences, and cravings. On the other hand, she is intermittently cautious of the stereotypes and weaknesses that white society shows against her. This issue bases an incoherent sense of self.

In a touching sentence, she speaks: "I feel like I am two people—one who knows who I am, and another who is always trying to fit into a mold that was never made for me" (15). The protagonist's speech recurrently fluctuates between her real voice and the voice she feels indebted to assent in a white society.

Social get-togethers also intensify this crumbling. In one point, she goes to a party where she is the only colored person, uttering "I could see the curiosity in their eyes, like I was a specimen under a microscope. I laughed and smiled, but inside, I was screaming" (81). This issue displays the intense difficulty of doing a version of herself that is satisfying for her peers though feeling essentially detached from that character.

The emotional discomfort of this brawl is unsettled. In a discriminating moment, she emphasizes, "Sometimes, I feel like I am losing myself in the process of trying to be accepted. Who am I if I am not what they want me to be?" (90). This assertion shows the emotive weight of double consciousness, as her identity becomes disjointed, irresolute between her unsophisticated self and the exterior principles situated on her.

### 6.3. Racial Microaggressions and Everyday Oppression

As mentioned earlier, Fanon asserts that microaggressions are regarded as subtle, average acts of racialized dehumanization that underline the colonial gaze, and lead to the subject's being perceived as mediocre, other, or strange. These microaggressions are palpable in such practices as dismissive comments, stereotypes, or implicit biases, which bring about the unending emotional influence of racism on relegated people (Sue *et al.* 71).

The matter of micro-aggressions is depicted through inadvertent assertions and stereotypes that the key character observes. In an evidently nice exchange, a white character states, "You speak so well for someone from your background," specifying that the protagonist's race is in actual fact linked with a scarcity of knowledge. The narrator utters, "It's as if my existence is a constant reminder that I don't fit their narrative of what a black person should be" (41). This proclamation not only exemplifies the microaggression but also gives away the startling spirit of these comments, which is to submit to stereotypes.

These microaggressions are not disjointed incidents; they induce an impressive structural shrewdness. For example, in a job interview, the narrator knows about the interviewer's unplanned transformation in behavior when he finds out her name, which is viewed as "too ethnic." She calls to mind, "I could see the hesitation in their eyes, as if my name alone disqualified me from being a suitable candidate" (95). This moment shows how microaggressions act in professional locations, and toughen hindrances to opportunity.

Fanon believes that racism is not only a universal problem but also substantial in commonplace social interactions. Clarke validates this through her communications in her community, where unexpected comments and prospects about her identity accumulate. For instance, when a neighbor calmly comments, "You people are always so good at sports," it echoes a stereotype that decreases her identity to a naïve narrative, further establishing the idea that her value is related to her race (20). In another point, we read,

You tell a teacher someone is calling you names. *Blackie. Monkey girl. Golliwog.* The teacher stares at you, exasperated, as if to say: *Do you really expect me to do something about it?* The next time you have a grievance, you look for a different teacher. This is how it changes us. This how we're altered. (33)

As stated already, all over her memoir, Clarke alludes to the everyday racism she tolerates as a black minority growing up in 1980s Australia. With her stories, Clarke paints a critical portrayal of a time and place when racial thoughtlessness was prevalent. As a child, Clarke was mocked cruelly, and to make matters worse, many teachers offered no provision. In this quote, she comments on how this lack of constructive leadership from teachers shows students they can escape their racist intimidation since no one will punish them.

The increasing consequence of these microaggressions causes a deep feeling of dislocation for the protagonist, as she deals with a world where her identity is repetitively questioned and lessened. She refers to her experiences, asserting, "Every day feels like a battle to prove my worth, not just to myself, but to a society that sees me as less" (21). This feeling stands for the expressive and mental pain of living in a place where microaggressions are widespread.

### 6.4. Resistance, Agency, and Cultural Reclamation

Fanon discusses that resistance is a central reaction to colonial repression. He notes that colonized individuals are supposed to vigorously resist the dehumanization and violence imposed on them by colonial powers. This resistance is not only bodily but also mental, as it embraces retrieving one's identity and refusing the compulsory narratives of lowliness (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 3-4).

Moreover, agency, for Fanon is the capability of human beings and communities to act self-sufficiently and make selections that form their own destinies. He accentuates that colonized people have to declare their agency to get away from the mental manacles of colonialism (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 72-90). Additionally, cultural reclamation contains the procedure of reliving and invigorating aboriginal cultures that have been repressed or relegated due to

colonialism. Fanon maintains that reclaiming cultural identity is vital for emotional healing and political liberty (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 170-174.)

In a main part, the core character expresses, "I refuse to be defined by your expectations. My story is mine to tell, not yours to rewrite" (28). This statement plays a central role in her journey, as she has to defy the expected outlines that have disturbed her sense of self. By confirming her freedom to take action, she recuperates her identity and clashes with the authoritarian powers imposed on her.

In the play, the protagonist is encompassed in plentiful groupings of storytelling, using her voice to recoup her narrative and provoke the stereotypes arranged for her. For example, through a monologue, she articulates, "Every story I tell is an act of defiance. I am not just a character in your book; I am the author of my own life" (3). This declaration gives emphasis to the power of narrative as a tool for self-affirmation and cultural confrontation. Also, there are myriad ways of telling it. The young black wunderkind, the son of a cane-cutter with the god-knew-how-it-happened first-class degree in pure mathematics. Gough Whitlam, the sensible new Australian prime minister, dismantling the last vestiges of the White Australia Policy. That fool English politician Enoch Powell, and his rivers of blood anti-immigration nonsense. (Clarke 3)

Early in the memoir, Clarke introduces the key theme of storytelling by recognizing that there are a lot of ways to tell a story. In this part of the book, she gives a bird's-eye view of happenings that caused her being born in Australia. In her telling, Clarke will focus on the social freedom of movement afforded to her father owing to his mathematics Ph.D., how Australia looked liberal and friendly as a result of Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's political reforms, and how anti-Black rhetoric in the UK pushed her parents to look for somewhere benign to raise their children. Nevertheless, Clarke admits that this is only one account of her story, and she is telling it since it aligns with her theory of how the world works.

What is more, Clarke uses performance as a way to study her identity and express her feelings. In a touching scene, she performs a piece that mirrors her experiences with racism and identity, asserting, "As I stand here, I am not just speaking for myself; I am speaking for every voice that has been silenced" (18). This performance not only enables her to sustain her identity but also is regarded as a communal indicator of opposition against the universal forces that downgrade her and others like her.

Fanon's theory represents the distinction of awareness and action in the hunt for liberty. He thinks that "the oppressed must reclaim their narrative to affirm their existence" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 196). This issue is in line with the Clarke's journey in *The Hate Race*. By accentuating her identity, she represents impartiality through observant action.

## 7. CONCLUSION

*The Hate Race* shows the harsh experiences of racialized people in a contemporary Australian society. The novel depicts how racism, microaggressions, and the "white gaze" interfere with identity consciousness and self-perception. The main character's disinclination between her true self and the outlooks enacted by a white society typifies Fanon's double consciousness. The book not only ricochets the repercussions of colonialism in modern multicultural places but also accentuates the power of fight and self-affirmation. Clarke approves that literature can act as both a looking glass of joint biases and a chance for convalescing agency, identity, and cultural voice.

It was also found that Clarke employs performance to express her feelings. This performance not only permits her to maintain her identity but also is observed as a shared sign of disagreement with the worldwide forces that lower her and others like her. Thus, Fanon's theory embodies the division of awareness and action in the quest for freedom. This matter is in harmony with the Clarke's journey in *The Hate Race*. By stressing her identity, she denotes detachment through watchful action.

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